

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 OMB-01 SCCT-02

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O P 291430Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3936

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY

AMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 306

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

CINCEUR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 1329

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, YE, YS

SUBJ: ASSASSINATION OF FORMER FONMIN MUHAMMAD AHMF
NU'MAN

KUWAIT PASS MUSCAT, DOHA

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

DEPT PASS BAGHDAD

1. SUMMARY: PROMINENT YAR POLITICAL LEADER, FORMER FONMIN
AND PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR MUHAMMAD AHMAD NU'MAN, ASSASSINATED
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IN BEIRUT EVENING JUNE 28. PDRY BEING BLAMED. STRONG

PROTEST LODGED WITH GOL EMPHASIZING THAT THIS IS THIRD MURDER OF PROMINENT NORTH YEMENI IN BEIRUT IN RECENT MONTHS. NU'MAN'S BODY BEING FLOWN TO SANAA FOR STATE FUNERAL JUNE 30. END SUMMARY.

2. MUHAMMAD AHMAD NU'MAN, LONG A NORTH YEMENI LEADER AND INTERNATIONAL STATESMAN OF ENERGY, IMAGINATION AND MODERATION, WAS MURDERED IN BEIRUT EVENING JUNE 28. ACCORDING SANAA RADIO, NU'MAN WAS KILLED AT 9 PM WHILE DRIVING HIS OWN CAR AFTER STOPPING AT A TRAFFIC LIGHT. FIVE SHOTS WERE FIRED AT POINT BLANK RANGE AND NU'MAN DIED WHILE BEING DRIVEN TO HOSPITAL.

3. NU'MAN WAS IN BEIRUT VISITING FAMILY AS RESULT OF RECENT POLITICAL UPHEAVALS WHICH CULMINATED IN JUNE 13 TAKE-OVER BY MILITARY. HE HAD LEFT SANAA JUNE 11 ON A MISSION ORDERED BY FORMER PRESIDENT IRYANI TO CONFRONT IRAQI PRESIDENT BAKR WITH DOCUMENTS IMPLICATING IRAQ IN CONSPIRACY TO OVERTHROW NORTH YEMEN GOVERNMENT. ON JUNE 13 WHEN INTERNAL MANEUVERING INITIATED BY SEIZURE OF IRAQI DOCUMENTS RESULTED IN MILITARY TAKE-OVER, NU'MAN WAS IN BEIRUT AWAITING ARRIVAL FROM JORDAN OF CHIEF OF STAFF MASWARI WHO HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO BAGHDAD. ON LEARNING OF TAKE-OVER, NU'MAN FLEW TO AMMAN FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH KING HUSSEIN AND THEN ON TO GULF STATES TO TAKE SOUNDINGS ON ATTITUDES TOWARD NEW REGIME. THEREAFTER, HE RETURNED TO BEIRUT TO BE WITH FAMILY. (HIS CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOLS IN BEIRUT).

4. WITHIN YAR LEADERSHIP, NU'MAN WAS AN OPEN ADVERSARY OF FORMER AND NOW AGAIN PRIMIN MUHSIN AL-AYNI. IT WAS HE WHO HAD PUT TOGETHER THE COALITION WHICH FORCED AL-AYNI OUT OF OFFICE IN DECEMBER 1972. HIS OPPOSITION TO PRESENT COMMAND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN HAMDI WAS ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS PUBLIC. HE FULLY REALIZED THAT AFTER JUNE 13 AND AS LONG AS PRESENT REGIME REMAINS IN POWER HE HAD NO PLACE IN YEMEN. SAME APPLIED TO HIS FATHER, ELDER STATESMAN AHMAD MUHAMMAD NU'MAN WHO JOINED PRESIDENT IRYANI IN RESIGNING FROM REPUBLICAN COUNCIL AND ACCEPTING POLITICAL EXILE.

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4. NU'MAN IS THE THIRD PROMINENT YAR FIGURE TO HAVE BEEN MURDERED IN BEIRUT IN RECENT MONTHS, OTHER TWO HAVING BEEN PRESIDENT OF TAIZ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND AN AUTHOR/REFUGEE FROM ADEN WHO HAD WRITTEN AN EXPOSE OF AFFAIRS IN SOUTH. IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED HERE THAT A PDRY ASSASSINATION GROUP RESIDENT IN BEIRUT, PERHAPS CONSISTING OF PALESTINIANS, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR NU'MAN'S ASSASSINATION AS WELL AS EARLIER MURDERS. INEVITABLY, THERE ARE SOME, BUT NOT

MANY, WHO SUSPECT HAMDI OR OTHER MEMBERS OF PRESENT COMMAND COUNCIL. WE DOUBT THIS. HAMDI IS TOO SENSIBLE TO CARRY VINDICTIVENESS TO SUCH A POINT AND HE HAS CAREFULLY ESCHEWED VIOLENCE OF ANY SORT SINCE TAKE-OVER.

5. YARG HAS LAUNCHED STRONG PROTESTS WITH GOL BOTH HERE AND IN BEIRUT, POINTING TO PREVIOUS MURDERS AND REQUESTING THOROUGH INVESTIGATION.

6. DESPITE NU'MAN'S POSITION OF OPPOSITION TO PRESENT REGIME HE IS EVIDENTLY TO BE ACCORDED FULL HONORS DUE TO ONE OF REPUBLICAN YEMEN'S FOREMOST LEADERS. A SPECIAL PLANE WAS DISPATCHED TO BEIRUT JUNE 29 TO RETURN HIS BODY TO THE CAPITAL FOR STATE FUNERAL JUNE 30. COMMAND COUNCIL HAS ALSO INVITED AHMAD NU'MAN TO RETURN TO YEMEN AND ASSURED HIS SAFETY.

7. COMMENT: NU'MAN'S DEATH LEAVES A LARGE VOID ON THE YEMENI POLITICAL SCENE. HIS FIRST LOYALTY WAS ALWAYS TO HIS FATHER WHO HAD SPENT A LIFETIME IN AND OUT OF JAIL IN THE 30 YEAR STRUGGLE TO ABOLISH THE IMAMATE AND CREATE A REPUBLICAN YEMEN. HE WAS LOYAL, TOO, TO HIS FELLOW SHAFI'IS AND THEIR SPECIAL INTERESTS IN THE SOUTHERN PORTIONS OF THE COUNTRY. BUT HE WAS A BELIEVER ABOVE ALL IN THE INDEPENDENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN ULTIMATELY UNITED NORTH AND SOUTH YEMEN. HE WAS A SOURCE OF ENDLESS IDEAS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL MODERNIZATION. HIS CLEVERNESS AND FRENETIC ACTIVITY (WHICH EARNED HIM THE ARABIC NICKNAME EQUIVALENT TO WHIRLWIND OR DUSTDEVIL) OFTEN RUBBED HIS COLLEAGUES THE WRONG WAY. NEVERTHELESS HIS INTELLECT AND CREATIVITY WERE BROADLY RESPECTED. HE WILL BE PARTICULARLY MISSED IN THE CONTEXT OF US-YEMENI RELATIONS. HE HAD SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE IN THE YARG
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DECISION TO RE-ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH THE US IN JULY 1972. AFTER RE-ESTABLISHMENT, AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND LATER POLITICAL ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT, HE COOPERATED UNSTINTINGLY TO RESTORE AND EFFECTIVE US PRESENCE IN YEMEN.
CRAWFORD

NOTE BY OC/T: SANAA 1329 NOT PASSED BAGHDAD.

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NNN

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